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INFO RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 4001
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RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0488
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0165
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0498
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 4217
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2501
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0527
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1162
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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1824
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 000620

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN AND DRL

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: AMCIT RABBI TOLD TO LEAVE UZBEKISTAN IMMEDIATELY

REF: A. TASHKENT 517

[B](#). TASHKENT 610

[C](#). TASHKENT 585

Classified By: POLOFF R. FITZMAURICE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#). (C) On June 4, the Ministry of Interior and Visa and Registration Department (OVIR) informed Rabbi David Gurevich, a dual American-Israeli citizen whose accreditation and visa expired on April 1 (ref A), that he must leave Uzbekistan immediately. According to Gurevich, the OVIR official told him that he was simply carrying out a decision made at "a higher level." Gurevich told poloff that he was ready to comply with the government's demand, and planned to depart Uzbekistan on an early morning June 5 flight to Tel-Aviv. Gurevich told Consular Chief on June 2 that he was waiting for a decision on his case in the next few days from Batir Khusanbaev, a presidential advisor on religious affairs. After talking to OVIR, Gurevich attempted but failed to get into contact with Khusanbaev.

RABBI EXPELLED AFTER PRESS INTERVIEW?

[2](#). (C) The Israeli Ambassador told the Ambassador on May 30 that Gurevich had spoken to the Israeli press regarding the Uzbek government's threats to deport him, resulting in large headlines in Israeli. According to the Israeli Ambassador, Gurevich's decision to speak to the press likely sealed his fate, and afterwards, he told Gurevich to prepare to leave Uzbekistan. The Israeli Ambassador does not intend to fight the Uzbek government's decision and is prepared to state publicly that anti-Semitism was not behind the government's decision to expel Gurevich. During his June 2 conversation with Consular Chief, Gurevich denied talking directly to the Israeli press about his case (Note: The Israeli Ambassador told us that someone on Gurevich's staff talked to the Israeli press on his behalf. End note.)

COMMENT

¶3. (C) Rabbi Gurevich's sudden expulsion is no surprise. National Security Service Chief Rustam Inoyatov told the Ambassador on May 28 that Gurevich would be expelled from Uzbekistan soon (ref B - perhaps not incidentally, Inoyatov also correctly predicted that human rights activist Mutabar Todjibaeva would soon be released from prison on health grounds). Uzbek authorities previously detained and threatened to deport Gurevich on May 19 until a last minute reprieve by Foreign Minister Norov allowed him to stay in the country temporarily. We expressed to Gurevich our disappointment over the government's actions, and we will continue to urge it to reconsider its decision. However, we will not attempt to interfere in Gurevich's expulsion at this point, as we are afraid that doing so might place him at greater risk.

¶4. (C) We continue to believe, along with the Israeli Ambassador, that the motives behind Gurevich's expulsion are not linked to anti-Semitism, but are murky and appear to involve land, money, and divisions in the Bukharan Jewish community here, in the U.S. and in Israel -- a situation which in turn has probably been exploited by corrupt Uzbek officials.

NORLAND